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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 DEAE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07
JUSE-00 NSAE-00 SNM-02 TRSE-00 NSC-05 OES-07
OMB-01 USIE-00 SS-15 SSO-00 INRE-00 AID-05 AGRE-00
DODE-00 L-03 /069 W
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O 280747Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 816
WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE
INFO USMISSION GENEVA

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y FOR TEXT

WHITE HOUSE FOR PETER BOURNE

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: SNAR, AF
SUBJ: FIRST MEETING OF JOINT COMMISSION ON AFGHAN NARCOTICS MATTERS

REF: STATE 176139

1. SUMMARY: THE INITIAL MEETING OF THE JOINT COMMISSION ON AFGHAN NARCOTICS MATTERS (JC), WHICH INCLUDED REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVT OF AFGHANISTAN (GOA), THE UNDP (RES REP ROBERT BORTHWICK), AND THE USMISSION, WAS ESSENTIALLY AN EXPLORATORY SESSION AND FOCUSED ON VHE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE COMMITTEE'S FUTURE DISCUSSIONS. IT WAS AGREED THAT, FOR THE MOMENT AT LEAST, THE ATTENTION OF JC, AS WELL AS ANY CONCRETE GOA NARCOTICS CONTROL PROGRAMS, WOULD BE CONCENTRATED ON THE REGION OF THE HELMAND VALLEY, RATHER THAN ON OTHER NARCOTICS PRODUCTION AREAS. THE GOA REPS HAD FEW SPECIFIC PROPOSALS FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION, SO IT
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WAS AGREED THAT A VISIT TO AFGHANISTAN BY UNFDAC REP MICHAEL DE METRE WOULD BE MOST USEFUL IN DEVISING POSSIBLE PROGRAMS WHICH COULD BE CONSIDERED FURTHER BY THE JC. END SUMMARY.

2. THE INITIAL SESSION, CHAIRED BY GOA NARCOTICS COORDINATOR MOHAMAD YAHYA MAROOFI, INCLUDED A GENERAL DISCUSSION OF THE INITIAL FOCUS OF THE JC. MAROOFI INSISTED THAT, IN THE INITIAL

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STAGES, THE JC'S ATTENTION, AND ANY PROGRAMS MOUNTED BY THE GOA, WOULD BE LIMITED TO THE AREA OF THE HELMAND VALLEY BECAUSE THAT AREA IS MORE ACCESSIBLE, NARCOTICS CONTROL PROGRAMS WOULD BE MORE EASILY UNDERTAKEN THERE, AND, ACCORDING TO MAROOFI, BECAUSE THE U.S. HAS HAD AN HISTORICAL CONNECTION WITH AND INTEREST IN THE HELMAND VALLEY AND, THUS, THIS IS BELIEVED BY THE GOA TO BE THE USG'S AREA OF "PRIMARY" CONCERN. THE UN AND US SIDES AGREED TO DISCUSS THE HELMAND AREA FIRST, AFTER OBTAINING MAROOFI'S ACCEPTANCE, IN PRINCIPLE, THAT OTHER REGIONS OF AFGHANISTAN, SUCH AS THE MORE IMPORTANT PRODUCTION REGIONS IN THE PROVINCES OF NANGARHAR AND KONAR WOULD BE OPEN FOR CONSIDERATION IN THE FUTURE. MAROOFI EMPHASIZED THAT WHATEVER PROGRAM THE GOA MOUNTS, IT WILL OF NECESSITY REQUIRE A GRADUAL APPROACH GIVEN THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL REALITIES OF AFGHANISTAN. HE ADDED THAT BECAUSE NO SPECIFIC NARCOTIC-CONTROL PROJECTS HAD BEEN INCLUDED IN THE GOA'S ECONOMIC PLANNING UNTIL NOW, ANY SUCH PROJECTS WOULD ENTAIL ADDITIONAL EXPENSES WHICH WOULD NEED TO BE OFFSET BY CONTRIBUTIONS FROM EITHER THE US OR THE UN.

3. WE AND UNDP REP BORTHWICK REEMPHASIZED OUR INTEREST IN HAVING OTHER DONORS WHICH ARE INVOLVED IN AFGHAN NARCOTICS MATTERS -- AS WELL AS AFFECTED CONSUMER COUNTRIES -- PARTICIPATE IN THE JC, BUT MAROOFI REPLIED THAT BECAUSE NO OTHER DONORS ARE CONCERNED WITH THE HELMAND, THERE IS NO JUSTIFICATION FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION AT THIS TIME. HE DID ACKNOWLEDGE, HOWEVER, THAT ONCE DEVELOPMENTS EXPAND TO INCLUDE OTHER REGIONS, OTHER DONORS MIGHT
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POSSIBLY BE INVITED TO WORK WITH THE JC, BUT FOR NOW, THEIR INTERESTS SHOULD BE REPRESENTED BY THE UN.

4. MAROOFI CLAIMED THAT THE GOA, AT THIS POINT, WOULD LIKE AN ASSURANCE THAT THE USG, "IN PRINCIPLE", WOULD OFFER ASSISTANCE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HELMAND NARCOTICS CONTROL PROGRAMS PROPOSED BY THE GOA. IF SUCH AN ASSURANCE WERE FORTHCOMING, HE CONTINUED, INDIVIDUAL GOA MINISTRIES WOULD THEN BE ASKED TO DEVELOP SPECIFIC PROGRAMS IN ADDICT TREATMENT, CROP SUBSTITUTION AND INCOME SUBSTITUTION -- THENTO DETERMINE THEIR COSTS IN RESOURCES, PERSONNEL, ETC. HE EMPHASIZED THAT THE GOA IS READY AND WILLING TO MOVE FORWARD, BUT THAT THE SCOPE OF ASSISTANCE THE US IS READY TO OFFER MUST BE KNOWN IN ADVANCE. HE ADDED THAT THE SCALE OF THE PROGRAMS THE GOA ITSELF IS CONSIDERING IS NOT LARGE AT THIS TIME, AND HE REPEATED THAT A GRADUAL APPROACH WILL BE TAKEN INITIALLY (OVER A TIME-FRAME OF "FOUR, FIVE, OR SIX YEARS"). WE RESPONDED THAT A SPECIFIC "AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE" WOULD NEED TO BE DEFERRED UNTIL WE COULD DISCUSS WITH THE UN HOW TO PROCEED. WE STRESSED THAT USG EFFORTS AND FUNDS WILL BE CHANNELED THROUGH THE UN, AND THAT USAID COULD NOT BECOME INVOLVED IN ANY OF THESE PROGRAMS. MAROOFI WELCOMED THIS APPROACH AND SAID THAT THE UN'S EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE IN

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AFGHANISTAN WOULD BE VERY USEFUL IN THIS REGARD.

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WHITE HOUSE FOR PETER BOURNE

5. AS FOR SPECIFICS, THE REP FROM THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE SAID THAT HIS OFFICE HAD BEEN INVESTIGATING THE POSSIBILITY OF SUBSTITUTING ALMOND CROPS FOR OPIUM POPPIES, BUT THAT THE TIME-FRAME BEFORE NEWLY-PLANTED ALMOND TREES CAN COME INTO PRODUCTION COULD BE SOME 4 YEARS -- AND THAT 3 TO 4 YEARS OF TREE NURSERY DEVELOPMENT IS REQUIRED BEFORE THAT. HE BELIEVED, HOWEVER, THAT HIGH-QUALITY ALMONDS ARE AT LEAST MONETARILY COMPETITIVE WITH THE GROWING OF OPIUM, SO FAR AS THE FIELD PRICE OF THE LATTER CROP IS CONCERNED -- BUT THAT FURTHER STUDY IS NEEDED. MAROOFI ADDED THAT FURTHER STUDY IS ALSO NEEDED IN THE FIELD OF INCOME SUBSTITUTION BECAUSE OF THE LENGTHY DELAY BEFORE CROP SUB-STITUTION BECOMES VIABLE. THE INTERIOR MINISTRY REP POINTED OUT THAT ANY INCREASED ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY IN THE HELMAND WOULD REQUIRE ADDITIONAL FUNDS AND ASSISTANCE -- PREFERABLY WITHIN THE EXISTING UN PROGRAM.

6. U.S. REPS REITERATED OUR OFFER TO CONSIDER SERIOUSLY ANY PRO-POSALS PUT FORTH BY THE GOA. IN THIS REGARD, WE RAISED AGAIN THE OFFERS WE MADE PREVIOUSLY TO PROVIDE THE MEANS TO CONDUCT AN
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AERIAL SURVEY IN ORDER TO DETERMINE MORE ACCURATELY -- FOR THE PURPOSE OF ESTABLISHING A BASELINE -- THE EXTENT OF NARCOTICS PRODUCTION IN THIS COUNTRY. WE EMPHASIZED THAT THIS OFFER WAS NOT CONFINED TO ANY SPECIAL REGION -- AND THAT SUCH SURVEYING WOULD BE ENTIRELY UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR (WHICH WOULD PRESUMABLY WANT TO AVOID SENSITIVE BORDER AREAS). THIS SEEMED TO PROVOKE SOME INTEREST ON THE PART OF THE AFGHANS, WHO CLAIMED TO BE UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT OUR OFFER MADE DURING THE NARCOTICS TEAM VISIT IN APRIL HAD BEEN LIMITED TO THE AREA OF THE AFGHAN/PAKISTAN BORDER. THEY DID NOT THINK AERIAL SURVEYS WOULD BE NECESSARY IN THE HELMAND AREA, HOWEVER, BE-CAUSE GROUND OBSERVATIONS WERE ADEQUATE THERE. WE ALSO EMPHA-SIZED OUR INTEREST IN PROVIDING FURTHER TRAINING IN THE NARCO-TICS FIELD, AND MAROOFI RESPONDED THATTHE GOA HAS BEEN FORTH-COMING IN THIS REGARD AND WOULD CONTINUE TO BE SO.

7. IN CLOSING, IT WAS DECIDED BY ALL PARTICIPANTS THAT IT WOULD BE VERY USEFUL TO ASK MICHAEL DE METRE TO COME TO AFGHAN-ISTAN IN ORDER TO DEVELOP SOME SPECIFIC PROJECTS WHICH THE JC COULD CONSIDER IN CONNECTION WITH THE HELMAND PROJECT. ALTHOUGH MAROOFI AVOIDED BEING SPECIFIC OVER DE METRE'S ROLE, HE GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT DE METRE'S SERVICES WOULD BE UTILIZED AS THE JC EXPANDED ITS WORK. SEVERAL OF THE GOA OFFICIALS FROM OTHER MINISTRIES APPEARED TO HAVE HEARD OF DE METRE AND THEY SEEMED EAGER TO WORK WITH HIM.

8. COMMENT: THE TONE OF THE MEETING WAS FRIENDLY AND THE GOA SIDE GAVE THE IMPRESSION OF BEING SINCERELY PREPARED TO MAKE MEANINGFUL PROGRESS - ALBEIT IN THE LIMITED REGION (SOME 5,000 ACRES, PRODUCING APPROX 14 TO 20 KILOGRAMS OF OPIUM PER ACRE) THEY HAVE SELECTED FOR AN INITIAL PROJECT. THE HELMAND REGION THEY HAVE DESIGNATED IS AMONG THE HARD-CORE REGIONS IN WHICH OPIUM HAS BEEN RAISED FOR GENERATIONS -- BUT IS LOCATED IN AN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AREA WHERE THE GOA CAN EXERT POLICE POWER WITHOUT THE POLITICAL AND SECURITY COMPLICATIONS THEY FACE IN THE EASTERN TRIBAL AREAS. WE THINK SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATED PROGRESS HERE COULD POSSIBLY HELP THEM INTRODUCE SIMILAR PROGRAMS IN THE TOUGHER REGIONS ONCE THE TIME IS RIPE. ALTHOUGH WE STRESSED THAT CONCENTRATING OUR ATTENTION ON THE HELMAND REGION SHOULD NOT DIVERT OUR ATTENTION FROM THE DESIRABILITY OF ACHIEVING SOME PRODUCTION CUT-BACK THROUGHOUT AFGHANISTAN THIS YEAR, MAROOFI FINESSED THIS POINT, STATING THAT THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR WOULD LOOK INTO THAT ASPECT. THEREFORE, IT IS POSSIBLE THATTHE JC HAS LAUNCHED A USEFUL AND WORTHWHILE EFFORT TO MEET THE LONG-TERM GOAL OF OPIUM ERADICATION IN AFGHANISTAN -- BUT THAT SHORT-TERM RESULTS MAY BE MEAGER DURING THE COMING SEASON. WE INTEND TO CONTINUE TO ATTACK

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THAT PROBLEM THROUGH DEA'S COOPERATIVE EFFORTS WITH UNFDAC AND THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR.

9. IT SEEMS CLEAR TO US AT THIS POINT THAT ANY FORWARD MOVEMENT IN THE AFGHANISTAN NARCOTICS FIELD WILL BE DEPENDENT UPON PROGRAM IDEAS DEVELOPED BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, ESPECIALLY BY UNDP AND UNFDAC, AND FUNDED BY INTERESTED DONORS, INCLUDING THE U.S. THUS, FOLLOWING THE MEETING, WE AGREED WITH BORTHWICK THAT DE METRE SHOULD COME TO AFGHANISTAN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO BEGIN DEVELOPING POSSIBLE PROGRAM IDEAS FOR THE GOA. (BORTHWICK SAID THAT HE WOULD BE SENDING SUCH A REQUEST THROUGH HIS OWN CHANNELS.)
END COMMENT.
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Message Attributes

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Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977KABUL05182
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 176139, 72 STATE 176139
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Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1720641
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FIRST MEETING OF JOINT COMMISSION ON AFGHAN NARCOTICS MATTERS
TAGS: SNAR, AF, US, UNDP, JC, JOINT COMMISSION
To: STATE WHITE HOUSE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/5af18662-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
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